COVID-19 Cultural Participation Monitor

Inequalities through COVID-19

the audience agency

Contents:

This report is part of a national research programme led by the Centre for Cultural Value in collaboration with the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre and The Audience Agency.

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CENTRE FOR CULTURAL VALUE

Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre
Led by nesta

UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council

the audience agency

COVID has been, to quote the title of the Centre for Cultural Value event in this topic, 'The Great Unequalizer'. In the first summary report from the Cultural Participation Monitor we emphasised that it has impacted everyone: mostly negatively, but differently. Here, however, we focus specifically in on *inequality* in its impacts. Who is more negatively impacted and how does that relate to or exacerbate previously existing and ongoing inequalities in audiences?

This report lays out evidence to support the following argument:

- Cultural engagement was unequal before COVID,
- The impacts of the pandemic have been experienced unequally, reinforcing this existing inequality,
- Further inequalities have developed in terms of health impacts and vaccination,
- And the result it likely to be increases in inequality in cultural engagement into the future.

Some of these findings are unsurprising; others benefit from additional nuance. We provide the latter where we can, but also recommend further exploration via the Taking Part and Active Lives Surveys, with their larger samples and different questions.

Since the impacts of COVID and inequality are only two of many topics that we have been interested in when designing the survey, we only asked about particular aspects of them. For example, we have not (at this stage) asked about details of health, well-being or bereavement. Similarly, we have asked about occupational status and role types, but not potentially more sensitive questions about furlough, redundancy or class. As a result, we look at the impact of COVID mostly in terms of people's amount of free time and money. We also differentiate groups by occupation type and other demographic characteristics (such as age, ethnicity, disability), as well as Audience Spectrum (a population classification based on how people tend to engage in cultural activities).

There is, of course, more to say on these topics. But our overall message here is simple:

- Cultural engagement was already unequal,
- COVID has affected (and is likely to continue to affect) people unequally,
- Therefore, *all else being equal*, is likely to increase that pre-existing inequality.

That 'all else being equal' is key. There are a wide range of ambitions for this greater inclusivity bubbling up throughout the sector and a clear appetite for change. This is good, and necessary.

The category of 'publicly-funded cultural organisations' is itself broader as a result of Cultural Recovery Funding, furlough and other support during the pandemic. But if we don't benefit the public more broadly and equally than before, we will ourselves be further *increasing* inequality. To engage a broad and representative spectrum of the population will take substantial change, but there is both the appetite and opportunity. If successful, we will have a more positive reason to say that 'we're all in it together'.

Previous Inequality

There is a wide range of research showing that cultural engagement is unequal, and in many different ways[1]. One way of illustrating that inequality is by looking at the proportion of people in different types of occupation, who attend different art forms. The following chart selects a few and — although there are some fluctuations for particular groups or art forms — engagement levels are generally higher for senior, managerial and professional roles, and lower for semi-routine, routine and manual roles.

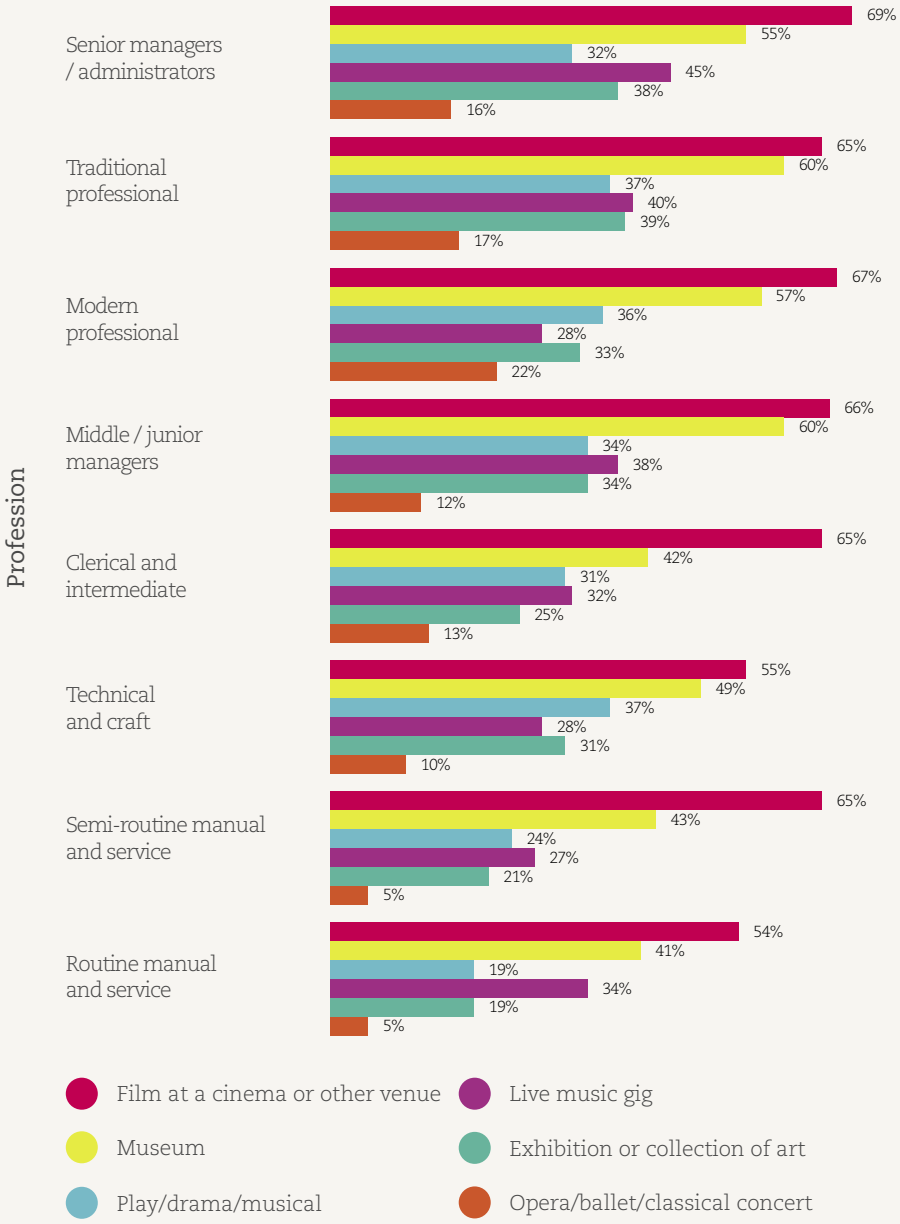
Whilst it's true that 'who engages with culture' is linked to how you define culture, data from the Taking Part survey consistently shows publicly funded arts and culture having higher engagement rates from those who are white, without long standing illness or disability, from 'upper' socio-economic groups, with higher educational qualification, and from areas with lower levels of deprivation.

1. Conveniently summarised in Chapter 4 of Culture is Bad for You by Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor, with a handy list of academic sources in the first footnote of that chapter, from Bourdieu's Distinction onwards.

These classifications are taken from the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, or NS-SEC. Examples of the occupations in each category are:

- Senior managers or administrators (usually responsible for planning, organising and co-ordinating work, and for finance) such as: finance manager, chief executive.
- Traditional professional occupations such as: accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil /mechanical engineer.
- Modern professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer.
- Middle or junior managers such as: office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, clerical worker, call centre agent, nursery nurse.
- Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- Semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant.
- Routine manual and service occupations such as: HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.

Proportion attending 12 months before Covid-19 (%)



Unequal Impacts of the Pandemic

We asked about the impacts of the pandemic in terms of **time and money.**

For money:

We asked whether 'as a result of Covid-19' people's household income had:

a. gone up

b. gone down

c. stayed about the same

We also asked the same questions about their expenditure. Where both had changed in the same direction, we asked a follow-up, about which change was greater. **This allowed us to summarise responses into those who, overall, had 'more', 'less' or 'about the same' amount of money as a result of the pandemic** (or 'prefer not to say': selected by only 45 out of the 1,533 respondents).

For time:

We asked 'What best describes the impact of Covid-19 on your amount of free time?' with the options:

a. I have had more free time

b. I have had less free time

c. It has been about the same.

Although having more money is more likely to be viewed as a positive, having more time could have negative causes and consequences (e.g. furlough, redundancy, loss of sociable activity).

What we seem to see in the results is that:

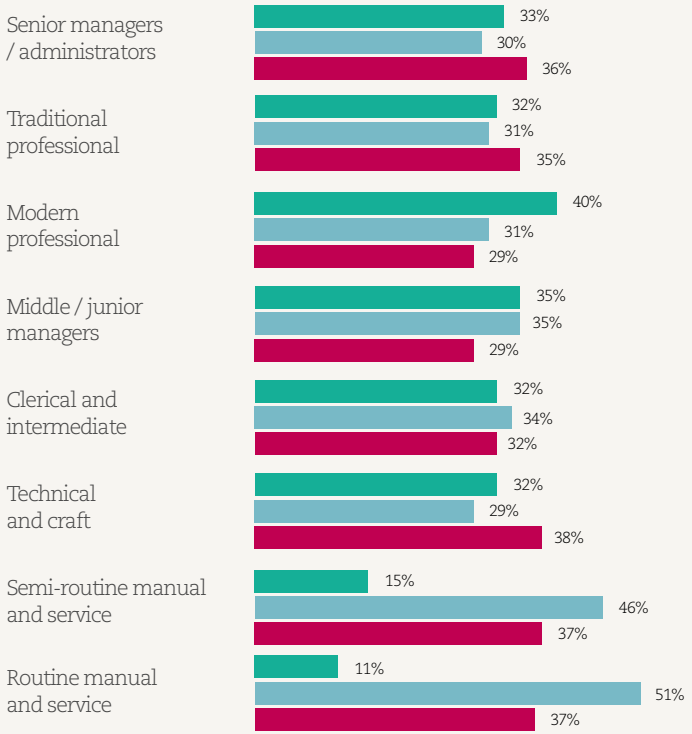
- Those who are least affected by the pandemic have seen least change in terms of time.
- Groups who have been more affected often have higher proportions
- both for those who have more time and those who have less time. One way or the other, things have changed more dramatically for these groups.

It is worth noting that the 'money' question refers to the household, but 'time' to the respondent themselves.

Unequal Impacts: by Occupation

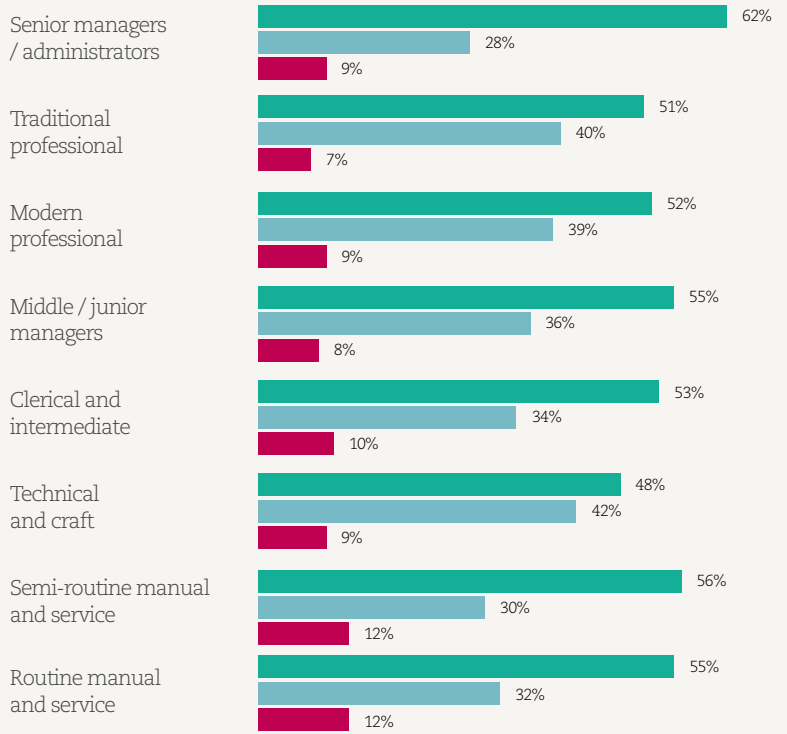
We can see that those in Semi-routine and Routine Manual and Service occupations are much less likely to have reported increases in money during the pandemic, and more likely to have the same amount of money. They are also among the most likely to have less money. This may well be because people in these occupations are, for example, less likely to be able to work remotely and to have saved money on commuting, and to have had to work 'as normal' throughout lockdown, or been furloughed on 80% pay.

Change in money by occupation



Modern professionals are more likely to have more money than less (by 40% to 29%). They are the only group for whom this is the case.

Change in time by occupation

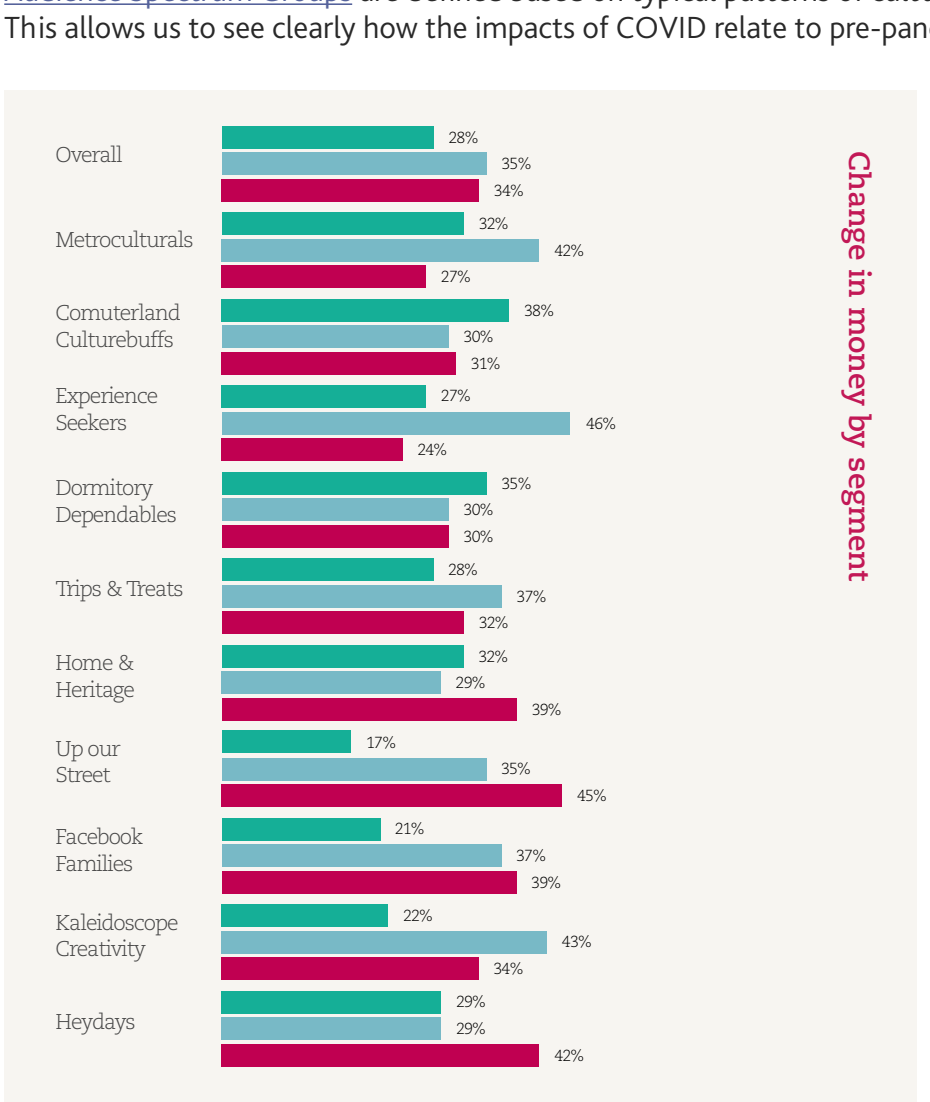


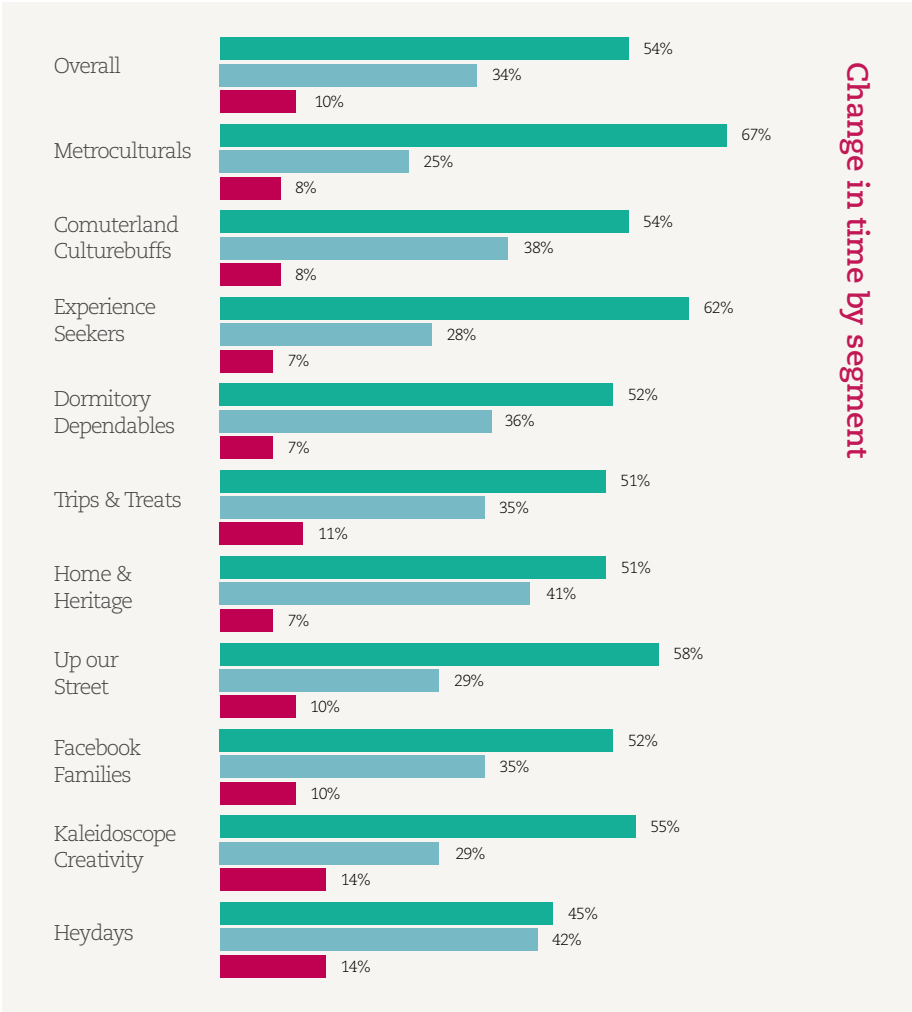
Changes in the amount of time available to people are less clear-cut and all groups are more likely to have more rather than less time. That said, those in Semi-Routine, Routine Manual and Service occupations are most likely to have less time and those in Senior Management roles are most likely to have more time.

More Same Less

Unequal Impacts: by Audience Spectrum

Audience Spectrum Groups are defined based on typical patterns of cultural engagement.
This allows us to see clearly how the impacts of COVID relate to pre-pandemic behaviours.





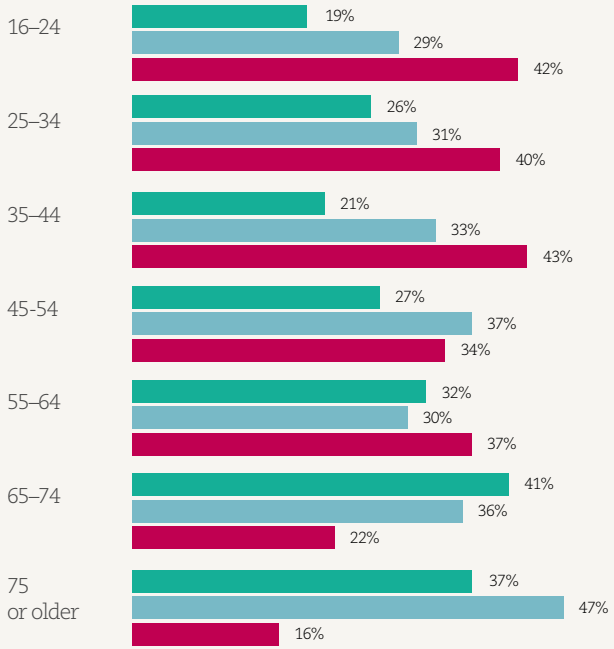
- The five **highest culturally engaged** groups have a **below-average proportion with less money**.
- The other five **lower culturally engaged** groups have **above average proportions with less money**.
- The three groups with the **lowest proportion with more money** are also **low engagers**.

- The groups which are **most likely to have more time** and least likely to have less time are both **highly engaged** (Metroculturals and Experience Seekers)
- Those **least likely to have more time** and most likely to have less time are **lower engaged** (Kaleidoscope Creativity and Heydays).

Unequal Impacts: by Age

The financial impact of COVID has fallen most heavily on those who are younger. Whilst all age groups under 65 are more likely to have less money than more, 16-24s and 35-44s reported the two lowest proportions having more money and the two highest proportions having less. Those in between fare little better.

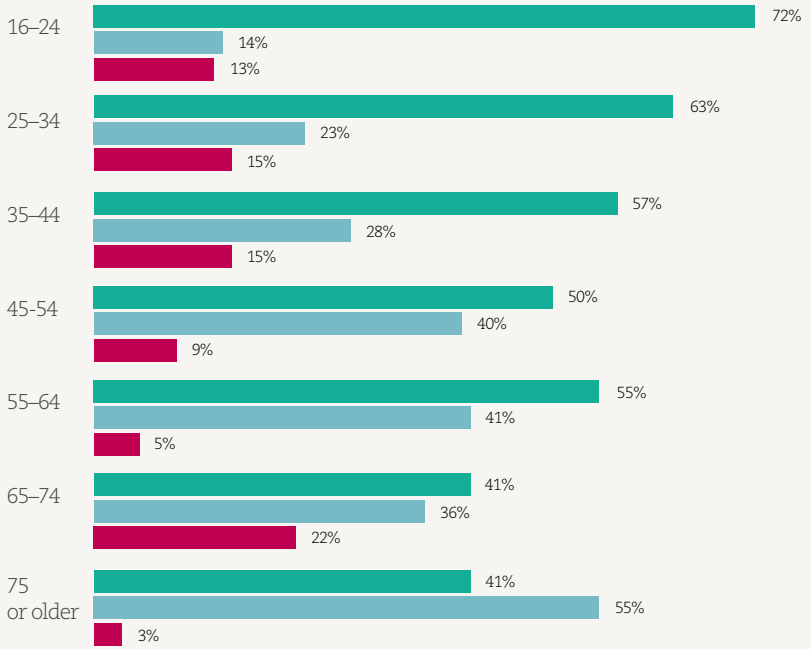
Change in money by age



Those over retirement age, however, were much more likely to report being better off than worse off (with many 'about the same' as well, likely reflecting fixed income from pensions, for example).

More Same Less

Change in time by age

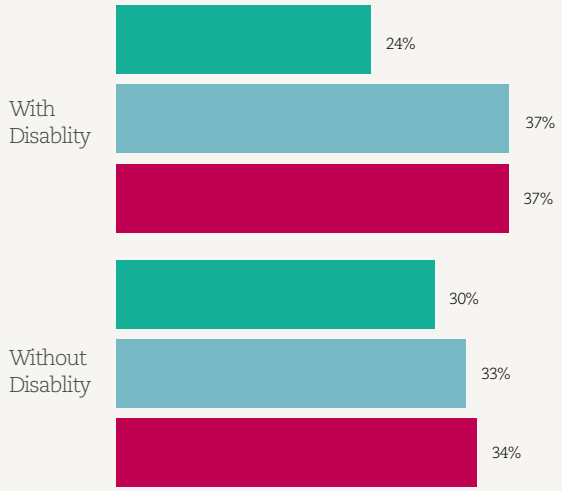


Time varied strongly by age as well. Although all age groups were more likely to report having more rather than less time, the proportions steadily drop with age. Having 'about the same' amount of time goes the other way, so that over 65s were most likely to give that response. Those who were more squeezed for time were younger age groups, especially 15% of 35-44s (perhaps due to home schooling).

Unequal Impacts: by Disability

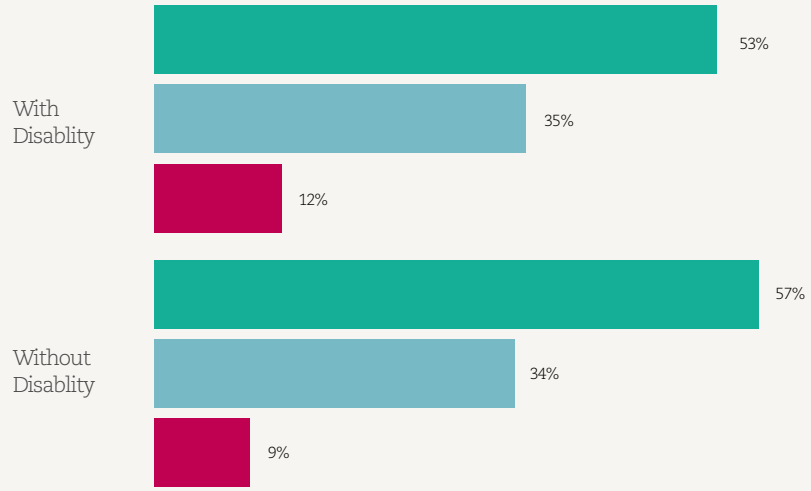
Once again, the impact of COVID reinforces existing inequalities in terms of long term illness and disability.

Change in money by disability



Those who reported having a **long term illness or disability** are **less likely to have more money** (24% vs 30% of those without) and **more likely to have less money** (37% vs 34%).

Change in time by disability



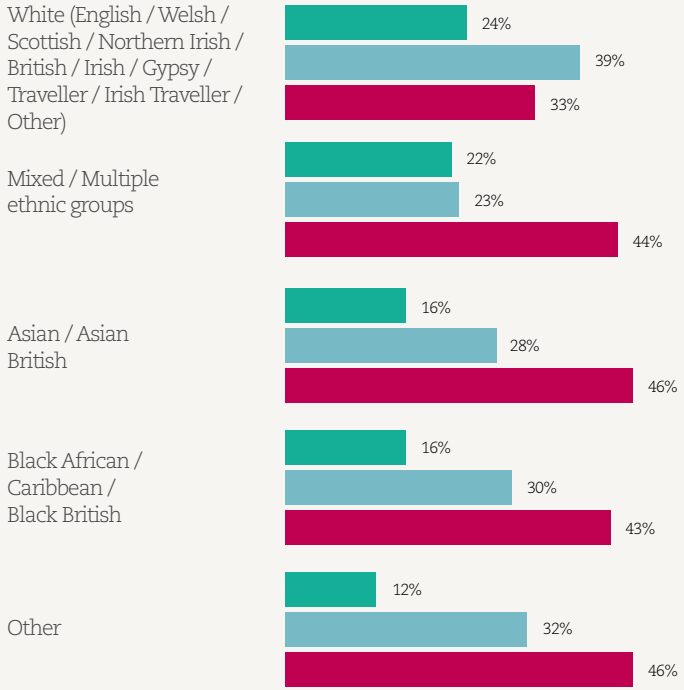
The same was true for the amount of time, with **53% of respondents identifying as having a long term illness or disability saying they have less time now**, vs 57% of those who do not.

More Same Less

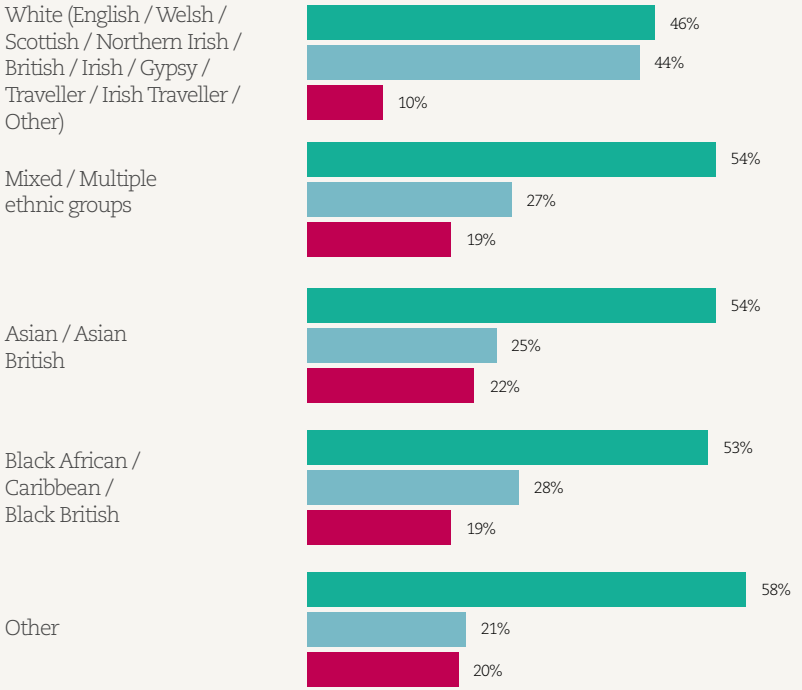
Unequal Impacts: by Ethnicity

Due to the sample size being smaller for Wave 2 (1,533), we used the larger sample from Wave 1 (6,055) to look at the impacts by ethnicity.

Change in money by ethnicity



Change in time by ethnicity



The **differences by amount of money are stark**, with only 33% of White respondents reporting having less money, compared to 43% or more for each of the other groups.

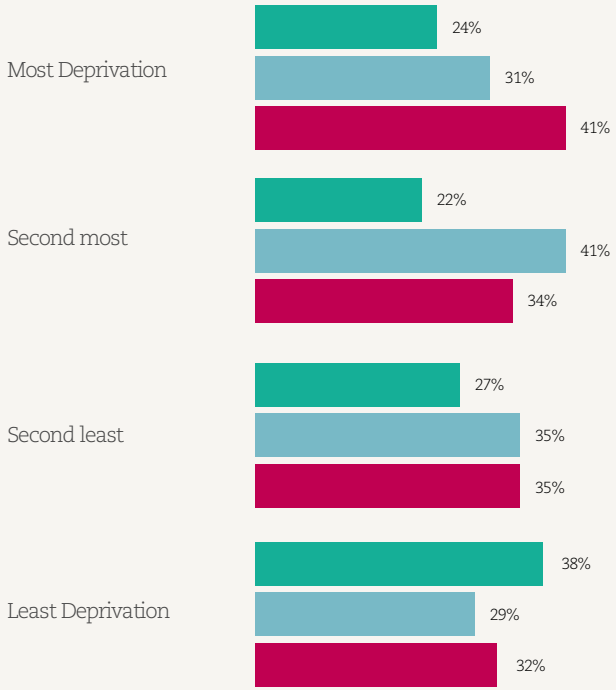
More Same Less

For those with more money, the difference was mostly between White respondents (24%) and those who were Asian (16%), Black (16%) or of another ethnicity (12%). The net proportion of White respondents who were worse off (having subtracted those who were better off) was only 10%; it was 30% for Asian respondents, 27% for Black respondents and 34% for respondents from 'Other' backgrounds.

Unequal Impacts: by Deprivation

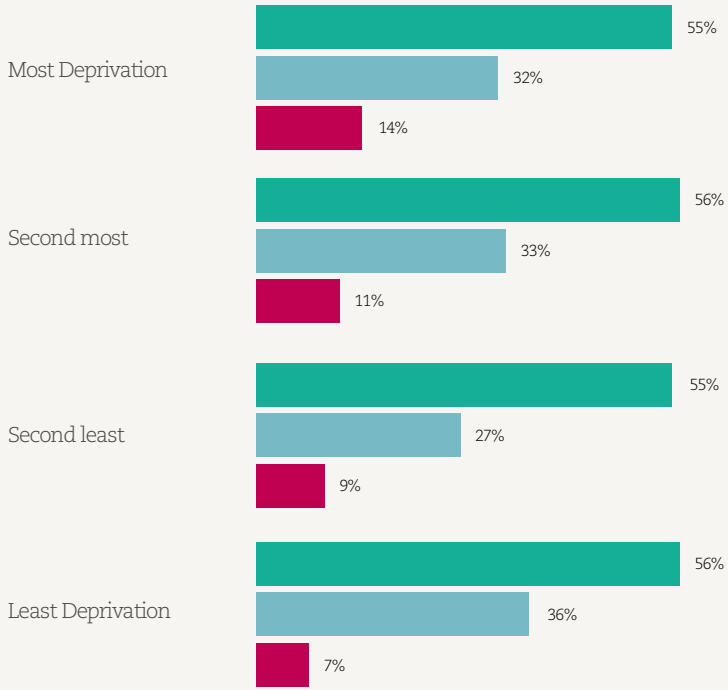
We allocated respondents to four bands of relative deprivation based on where they live, using their postcodes and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. We could only do this for English respondents, since deprivation measures are different and not directly comparable across the UK nations. These bands (or quartiles) describe the area that people live in, rather than the people themselves. But on an aggregate level, it is likely that people living in a less affluent area are less affluent and those living in more affluent areas are more affluent.

Change in money by deprivation



Those from the most deprived areas were particularly likely to say they had less money (41%) — the same proportion of the second most deprived group who reported having 'about the same' money. Those from the least deprived quartile, though, were most likely to say they had more money (38%): an archetypal case of 'to those who have, more will be given'.

Change in time by deprivation



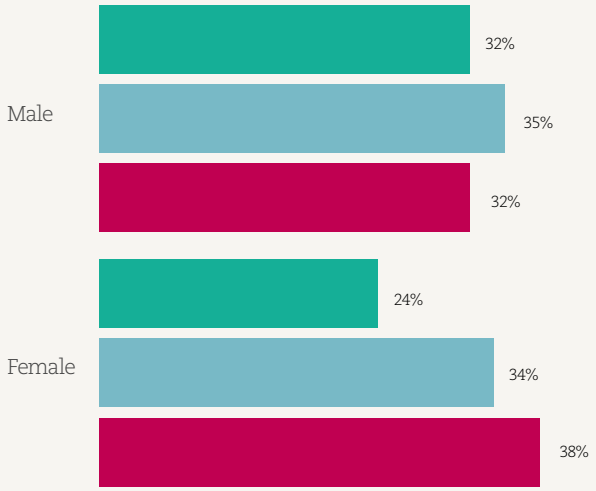
The big difference by deprivation in terms of time is that the proportion with 'about the same' time steadily increases as areas get more affluent, with the proportion with less time decreasing accordingly. Double the proportion of those in the lowest quartile (14%) had less time than those in the highest (7%).

More Same Less

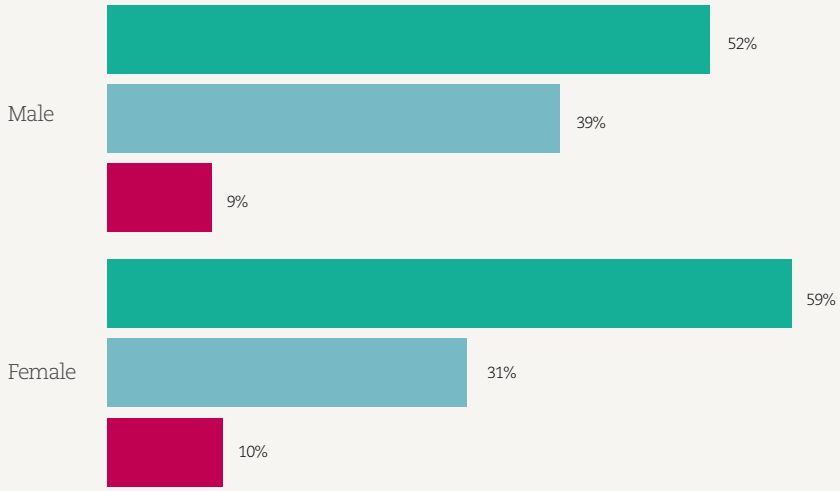
Unequal Impacts: by Gender

The pandemic has placed particular pressures on women, with higher representation in forms of employment sectors which have furloughed staff or made redundancies, combined with greater pressure to simultaneously work and deliver childcare (and where this hasn't been possible, to lose work as a result).

Change in money by gender



Change in time by gender



More Same Less

The result is a substantial difference in the proportions reporting 'more' money (only 24%, cf. 32% for men) and an equivalent difference in those with 'less' money (38% cf. 32% for men). This means that while there was no net difference in the number of men with more or less money, there was a 14% difference for women.

The main difference in amount of time by gender is that 7% fewer men reported having more time, but 8% more reported having less. As noted earlier, however, this could be masking much greater unequal impacts on time, such as where these have forced women out of work: the net result may be 'more' or 'about the same' time, but only because other things have been foregone.

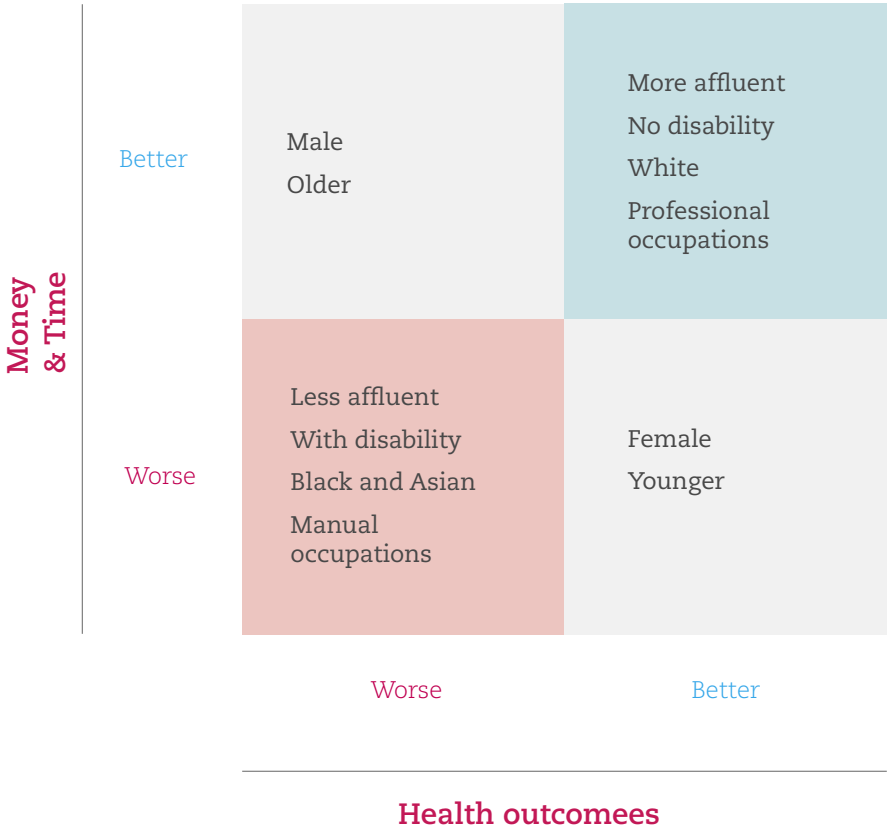
Health Implications

We've seen how the impacts of COVID have fallen unequally in terms of time and money, but it's important not to lose sight of the wider picture. There are, for example, severe difference in the health impacts that affect some, but not all, of the same groups.

- 92% of deaths have been among those aged 60 and over (NHS England figures, as of 1/4/21)
- Working age men diagnosed with COVID were twice as likely to die as working age women.

On the other hand, some groups are more negatively affected on both counts. These include those from areas of higher deprivation, who are Black or Asian, or who have a chronic illness / disability:

- "The mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas were more than double the least deprived areas".
- "People from Black ethnic groups were most likely to be diagnosed. Death rates from COVID-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups".
- There were a wide range of chronic illnesses and disabilities linked to worse clinical outcomes in the same report.



Vaccination

We will produce more detailed reporting focused on vaccination, but for this report it is worth noting that the proportion of people vaccinated varies for these different groups and is linked to inequality:

	Occupation	Audience Spectrum	Age	Disability	Ethnicity	Deprivation Quartile *(1=Most Deprived)*	Gender
Above Average							
91-100%			**75+** 98%				
81-90%			**65-74** 86%				
71-80%							
61-70%							
51-60%							
41-50%							
31-40%		**DD** 35% **H** 31%		**Yes** 39%	**White** 32%	**4th** 47%	Male 35%
30% of population received dose							
Below Average							
21-30%	**MP** 21%	**M** 30% **TT** 28% **US** 26%	**55-64** 21%	**No** 26%		**2nd** 31% **3rd** 30%	Female 26%
11-20%	**CI** 18% **SMA** 17% **MJM** 14% **TP** 10%	**ES** 19% **KC** 16% **FF** 15%	**45-54** 18% **35-44** 13% **25-34** 11%		**Asian** 16% **Mixed** 12%	**1st** 17%	
0-10%	**SMS** 8% **TC** 7% **RMS** 4%		**16-24** 4%		**Black** 8%		

Occupation
MP Modern professional · **CI** Clerical and intermediate · **SMA** Senior managers / administrators · **MJM** Middle / junior managers · **TP** Traditional professional · **SMS** Semi-routine manual and service · **TC** Technical and craft · **RMS** Routine manual and service

Audience Spectrum
M Metroculturals · **CC** Comuterland Culturebuffs · **ES** Experience Seekers · **US** Up our Street · **FF** Facebook Families · **KC** Kaleidoscope Creativity · **H** Heydays · **DD** Dormitory Dependables · **TT** Trips & Treats · **HH** Home & Heritage

Conclusion

We can see from the evidence in this report that COVID is likely to further increase existing inequalities in cultural engagement. The negative impacts of COVID in terms of time and money have tended to fall on those who are: younger; from Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnicities; from less affluent occupations and areas; disabled; and female. Most of these groups are under-represented in audiences for funded culture. The impact of the pandemic is therefore likely to accentuate these types of inequality.

At the point this fieldwork was conducted (finishing on 22nd February 2021) vaccination was concentrated among particular groups, not just by age and disability, but also affluence and ethnicity. This makes several groups more likely to engage in the future, despite already being more likely to have engaged — again increasing inequality.

Some of these increases to inequality may, of course, be complicated by the relative likelihood of different groups wanting to attend once they are able. We will be looking at the relationship between vaccination, safety measures and willingness to attend in a future report…

Context and Methodology

Background and Methodology

The Audience Agency commissioned Dynata to carry out a population survey online, with quotas based on age, sex, ethnicity, region and Audience Spectrum segment. 1,533 responses were received in the first wave, collected from from November 2020 to late February 2021. Additional waves of surveys will be undertaken every couple of months until autumn 2021. This report provides a summary of initial findings; there will be more summaries by topic and for future waves of the survey.

COVID-19: Impacts on the Cultural Industries and the Implications for Policy

The research forms part of the COVID-19: Impacts on the cultural industries and the implications for policy research programme, led by Centre for Cultural Value Director, Professor Ben Walmsley. The programme is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Covid rolling call and issued through the Arts and Humanities Research Council. A national consortium of researchers and cultural sector partners will analyse existing datasets and conduct targeted new research on the impacts of the pandemic on cultural organisations, practitioners and audiences. Researchers from the wider Centre for Cultural Value study team will be continuously collaborating on the research design as it goes forward. The COVID Monitor provides a key longitudinal research strand, allowing project partners to understand the changing impact of COVID on the cultural attitudes and behaviour of the UK population.

Audience Spectrum

Audience Spectrum segments the whole UK population by their attitudes towards culture, and by what they like to see and do. There are 10 different Audience Spectrum profiles that you can use to understand who lives in your local area, what your current audiences are like, and what you could do to build new ones. Audience Spectrum is the most accurate tool the sector has ever had to help target audiences and include a wider public. Analysis and customer tagging with Audience Spectrum work at both household and postcode levels, to help cultural organisations understand audience profile and reach, enabling really accurate targeting of activity and communications.

Get in touch to find out more

More about this report or the COVID Monitor

To discover more about this report or the COVID monitor, please contact:

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